

WASHINGTON, D.C. -Recently, President Obama announced the creation of a White House Office of Urban Policy. Congressman Charlie Wilson (OH-6) recognizes that this is a worthy project, but he wants to make sure that rural America gets equal consideration. Wilson joined with his fellow members on the Congressional Rural Caucus and sent the following letter to President Obama asking him to establish a White House Office of Rural Policy.

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As members of the U.S. House of Representatives from rural congressional districts, we have noted with interest your creation of a White House Office of Urban Policy. This letter is to encourage a similar and equivalent White House office to work on rural issues which affect Americans who live in less densely-populated areas of the country. The unique policy matters faced in rural America include, but are not limited to, specific concerns regarding agriculture, conservation, economic development, education, health care, information technology, and transportation infrastructure, among others. We are sure your administration would benefit from an office devoted to the effect of federal regulations on rural Americans and our communities.

Even broad policy measures can have specific, severe ramifications in rural areas. For instance, a recent proposal would reapportion the federal gas tax based on miles driven rather than gallons of fuel consumed. In rural areas, where the consumption of gasoline is more efficient on long commutes over un-crowded highways, many of our constituents commute more than 60 miles each day. Such a shift in policy would have a devastating effect on rural families' budgets and the bottom lines of our businesses, and we applaud you for rejecting the proposal. We hope you will continue this commitment to addressing the needs of rural communities.

As you work to elevate the concerns of rural Americans in your administration, the members of the Congressional Rural Caucus are ready to work with you on a bipartisan basis to provide input and information about the many issues with specific importance to our constituents. Thank you very much for your consideration of creating a White House Office of Rural Policy to directly address these topics. We look forward to working closely with you on the matters of concern to the millions of Americans in the rural congressional districts we represent.